



# The County Seat

News from the Leesburg District

June 2003

From Mark Herring  
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

**Welcome! *The County Seat: News from the Leesburg District* is an electronic newsletter to update you on recent events related to the Loudoun County Government and the actions of the Board of Supervisors, especially as they affect residents in the Leesburg District. I am hopeful *The County Seat* will help you stay informed about your County government and improve communications with me as your elected representative on the Board. I invite you to read the updates in this issue and welcome your comments and opinions.**

*Mark Herring*

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## FRANCES HAZEL REID CONSTRUCTION

The construction of Frances Hazel Reid Elementary School located near the intersection of the Route 15 Bypass and Route 15 Business in Leesburg is nearing completion and has been followed closely by area residents. The school is scheduled to open in late August for the 2003-2004 school year and will be the combined site of Smart's Mill Middle School, scheduled to open in time for the 2004-2005 school year. The construction of these 2 schools has greatly impacted this neighborhood.

Construction of the school entrance has been the subject of recent debate and apprehension in the community. Future alterations to the roadway and increases in traffic have area residents feeling uneasy, especially since this particular section of road on Route 15 Business just north of Dry Hollow Road, possesses many trees, vegetation, and rock outcrops, that adorn this northern gateway into Leesburg.

The concerns of neighborhood residents prompted me to initiate meetings to serve as a forum on this issue. The meetings included Leesburg Mayor Umstattd, Town, County, VDOT

and Loudoun County Public Schools Staff, along with residents from the Exeter subdivision and adjacent communities. I felt it was important for everyone involved to understand what changes would occur and how we could work together to best preserve this environmentally unique setting.

During the meeting, LCPS Staff presented the design for the entrance plans and followed it up with a walking tour of the site. The tour provided a good visual idea of the proposed changes, while meeting attendees were able to ask more pertinent questions and make comments about the plans. We were informed of the removal of trees and some of the rock formations so to accommodate the road widening, which will include turn lanes, an important safety component factored into the design plan. The County has closely monitored the plans and has made recommendations to LCPS Staff to find ways of best preserving this setting while keeping it safe.

## Loudoun Hospital in Leesburg



The Board of Supervisors has approved a resolution of support for the revitalization and expansion of services at the Cornwall Campus of Loudoun Hospital Center in Leesburg and the reestablishment of an acute care hospital at the Western Loudoun Medical Center (the Cornwall Campus).

In 1997, the hospital was relocated to the current facility in Lansdowne leaving Western Loudoun residents under served medically. In January of 2003, the emergency room of the Cornwall campus was reopened. This has resulted in shorter travel times for emergency services for citizens in the North and West of the County, improvement in patient outcomes, and has alleviated demand at the Lansdowne facilities.

Important services that are vital to the community are located on the Cornwall

Campus. These services include the 100-bed Loudoun Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, the 12-bed Psychiatric in-patient Unit of the Hospital, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services, and various administrative components of Loudoun Hospital Center and Loudoun Healthcare, Inc. In addition, space is being leased to Loudoun County for governmental services, and space is being provided free of charge to the State Health Department's Women, Infant, and Children's Program for a full-service Center as well as to the non-profit Catoctin Foundation's Loudoun Community Free Clinic.

According to hospital Chief Executive Rodney Huebbers, the current goal is to have the Leesburg facility fully functioning within five years. A request to the State to add beds in Leesburg will be submitted next year.

## Annexation Petition Dismissed

A special three-judge annexation court appointed by the Supreme Court of Virginia has dismissed an annexation petition that would have brought approximately 1900 acres of land surrounding the Leesburg Airport into the Town of Leesburg. This ends a long legal battle by four developer/landowners and Loudoun County Government.

In December 2002, the Board of Supervisors challenged the developer petition and requested appointment of the special three-judge panel. The court found that the petition was not supported by a majority of landowners, since only four of the eight landowners had not signed the petition. The court also found that the petitioners did not provide a satisfactory plan for the proposed annexation areas.

The County has called upon the Town to work together in a joint planning effort for the future. With this now behind us, I hope that the town and county can join together to calmly address the important planning issues for the area around the town. Such discussions should be held in the open with the public and press invited to attend, and the views of the citizens, particularly those who live in or near the affected area, need to be considered.

# Loudoun Commuter Bus Service Update

The Loudoun County Office of Transportation has put forth a proposal to purchase a fleet of 20 buses for the Commuter Bus Service in Loudoun County. The Loudoun County-sponsored system of commuter buses provides weekday bus service to Washington D.C., the Pentagon and Roslyn from stops in Purcellville, Hamilton, Leesburg and Sterling. The Bus Service currently operates under a contract with Yellow Bus Lines.

This service has seen a dramatic increase in ridership, up by 40% in the past year and currently averaging about 700 riders daily one way, for a total of 1400 riders per day. With increasing growth and traffic in the County, ridership is only expected to increase. The bus service charges riders \$1.50 - \$6.00 for a one-way fare.

According to Transportation Director, John Clark, by owning our own bus fleet the County is eligible to receive capital assistance funds and other grants for congestion relief, creating a 25% saving overall for the County. Other savings would be realized by less expensive fuel costs, as Loudoun County is exempt from the fuel tax and the purchased buses will be brand new making maintenance minimal. Funding for the \$8 million bus fleet will not directly

involve Loudoun County tax dollars, but would be funded through a \$5.5 million State transportation grant with the remaining \$2.5 million funded through the gasoline tax.

There is a counter view that the County should not be in the business of owning a bus fleet and it is the "camels nose under the tent" leading to a larger bureaucracy and higher costs. The Board of Supervisors has not yet made a decision on this matter, and the public will be able to voice their opinions during a public hearing scheduled on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at 6:30pm at the County Government Center.

The Office of Transportation is also considering a new Park and Ride site in the Leesburg area. Several sites are being considered and the staff will be working with the Town of Leesburg in trying to find the best location.



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*I would like to hear from you! For opinion or comment, please contact:*

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